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MARCH 30 1981

Dear Senator D'Amato:

Thank you for your inquiry of February 25 on behalf of Mr. Donald Wilson Stake concerning the fate of Korean opposition leader Kim Dae Jung and other developments in the Republic of Korea.

The U.S. Government welcomed Korean President Chun's decision to commute and reduce the original sentences handed down to Mr. Kim and his co-defendants. We note with encouragement the recent release of other imprisoned dissidents including poet Kim Chi-ha and Dr. Yun In-ho, a co-defendant of Kim Dae Jung. In another decision, most of the Koreans purged from government employment, academia and the press during the turmoil last year were declared eligible to return to their professions in January.

Although much remains to be done, we hope these actions foreshadow further moderation by the Korean Government. We view such conciliatory measures as positive contributions to the continuing development of representative institutions in Korea and the strengthening of U.S.-Korean relations.

Furthermore, we are encouraged by several other recent developments in Korea. These include the promulgation of a new constitution last November, the lifting of martial law and censorship in January, the active formation of new political parties, and the decision to hold a presidential

The Honorable
Alfonse D'Amato,
United States Senate.

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election last month. We believe the election of a new national assembly this spring will lead to an even more active political environment.

Sincerely,

Richard Fairbanks
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosure:

Correspondence returned.